

Nigel Gray

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Whare Kaupapa Atawhai | Conservation House

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30 April 2026

Ref: OIAD-6124

Tēnā koe Nigel

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 22 February 2026, in which you stated and asked for:

“..the following information for the period 1 January 2021 – present.

1. *Briefings and Key Messages*

Copies of any briefings, talking points, or key-message documents prepared for senior leadership or elected officials that relate to:

- forestry slash events*
- erosion or sedimentation linked to forestry*
- public communications about forestry impacts*

2. *Communications Strategy and Perception Management*

Copies of any communications plans or strategy documents that include reference to:

- “stakeholder messaging”*
- “public perception”*
- “communications risks”*
- “industry engagement”*

where these terms relate to forestry or forestry-related environmental impacts.

3. *External Input Into Public Statements (Refined Clause)*

Copies of any final versions of public statements (including press releases, website updates, advisories, or social media posts) relating to forestry that were reviewed, edited, or approved by any external party.

For each such document, please also provide:

- a) the name of the external party involved*
- b) the nature of their input (e.g., review, edits, approval)*
- c) the date on which their input occurred*

This request does not seek drafts, internal discussions, or emails — only the final published versions and the record of external input.

4. *Meetings With Forestry-Sector Representatives*

A list of all meetings held since 1 January 2021 between your agency and:

- forestry industry representatives*
- forestry lobby groups*
- PR or communications firms acting for forestry interests*
- the Forest Owners Association*
- Te Uru Rākau / NZ Forest Service*

For each meeting, please provide:

- *date*
- *attendees*
- *subject or purpose of the meeting*

I am not requesting minutes or detailed notes — only the meeting list.

5. *Conflict-of-Interest Declarations*

Copies of any conflict-of-interest declarations made by staff involved in:

- *forestry-related policy*
- *forestry compliance or enforcement*
- *environmental monitoring relating to forestry*
- *forestry-related public communications “*

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

On 18 March 2026, we extended the timeframe to respond to your request to 30 April 2026.

This was to ensure the Department would be in a position to make a decision on and prepare a proper response to your request as consultation with relevant parties was necessary.

In terms of the Department's approach to your request, we noted your interest in any external influence over public communications and decision-making with respect to the forestry industry and engagement with forestry-sector representatives. The forest industry typically refers to planted production forest, of which radiata pine makes up over 90% in New Zealand. We have borne all of this in mind, especially given that the Department manages public conservation land - that principally contains indigenous flora and fauna - with a view to protecting and restoring nature.

Consequently, it has taken some time to review the Department's records across a number of teams to identify what may be held by the Department within scope of the five parts making up your request.

While it is not uncommon for the Department to consult and inform other parties where our work affects them, this type of engagement is not considered to equate to public statements.

With respect to part 3 of your request, we have not identified final versions of public statements relating to forestry by the Department that involved review, editing or approval by external parties. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

We undertook a search to locate declared conflicts of interest by staff of the type you expressed an interest in. None were located. The Department does have appropriate policies and processes in place should such a type of declaration occur. Accordingly, we also refuse this part of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Please note that if a declaration or declarations had been located, a copy or the copies would likely have been withheld under sections 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(ba)(i) of the OIA, to both protect the privacy of natural persons and information which is subject to an obligation of confidence where the making of the information would likely prejudice the supply of similar information and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied.

Under section 15(1)(a) of the OIA, I have decided to grant your request but only to the extent that the Department holds information within the defined scope of your request with respect to parts 1, 2 and 4 of your request. However, more time is required to prepare the Department's response for release, and we will endeavour to get a response to you as soon as practicable. We apologise for any inconvenience that this may cause.

For your reference, some information will be withheld under section 9 of the OIA as applicable.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA and determined there are no public interests that outweigh the grounds for withholding.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the OIA.

Nāku noa, nā



Tim Bamford
Director, Terrestrial Biodiversity
Department of Conservation | *Te Papa Atawhai*